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OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(PUBLIC AFFAIRS)
WASHINGTON, D.C. · 20301
PLEASE NOTE DATE

2586

No. 704-94
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 16, 1994

UNITED STATES SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON OCEAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH

Secretary of Defense William Perry signed today a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Russian Federation on ocean climate research. On the Russian Federation side, the MOU was signed by Dr. Andrei Kokoshin for the Ministry of Defense and by Dr. Boris Saltykov for the Ministry of Science and Technology Policy. The Memorandum was concluded on December 16, 1994, at the meeting of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission in Moscow, Russia.

The agreement provides for cooperative science and technology activities using acoustics to monitor the average temperature of the oceans and to measure changes in Arctic ice thickness. Information from the cooperative activities will be used to better understand the role of the oceans in global climate change.

The MOU includes provisions for the use of military facilities and equipment for the collection of data, joint experiments, reciprocal visits to research laboratories and development of computer models of the interaction of the ocean and the atmosphere. This joint program capitalizes on the significant capabilities of both sides in underwater acoustics, oceanography, climate studies, and Arctic studies. All activities undertaken within the MOU would be done in a manner not to harm the environment or marine life.

The key provision of the MOU is collaboration on studies on the effects of low-frequency acoustic radiation on marine life. The MOU builds on previous scientific research collaboration between the two parties. In April 1994, Russian and American scientists teamed up in the Arctic to conduct a successful feasibility test for determining changes in the Arctic ice pack. A Russian acoustic source was suspended through the ice north of the Svalbard Archipelago and transmitted a carefully controlled signal 2,600 kilometers across the Arctic Basin to a U.S. receiver on an ice camp in the Beaufort Sea.

The MOU sighed today will enable strong collaboration on the acoustic thermometry research between U.S. and Russian scientists in contributing to a cohesive global effort by international oceanographic researchers in the quest to understand the oceans of the world and there role in climate variability.

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